DETROIT
METRO TIMES
VOL. 46 | ISSUE 03 | NOVEMBER 26-DECEMBER 9, 2025

The

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BY JEFF MILO

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DETROIT
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Bethany Nixon and Carey Gustafson of the Detroit Urban Craft Fair. Photo by Doug Coombe.

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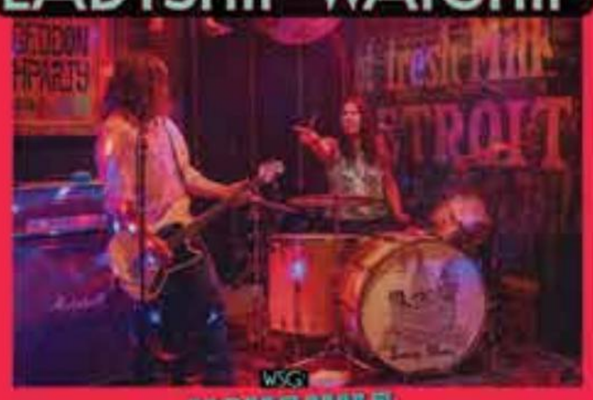
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28 ★ ★ 9PM
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EASTSIDE STILL ALIVE
LIVE BAND KARAOKE
DJ KILLA K IN THE LANES
SATURDAY NOV 29 ~~~~ 9PM NO COVER

FRI. DEC. 5TH
BIRDS FROM DINOSAURS
with
SPEED CIRCUIT
at
BOWLERO
9PM ★ NO COVER
18 & OVER

BOWLERO LANES & LOUNGE PRESENTS:
LADYSHIP WARSHIP



VOXANNA
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NO. 03
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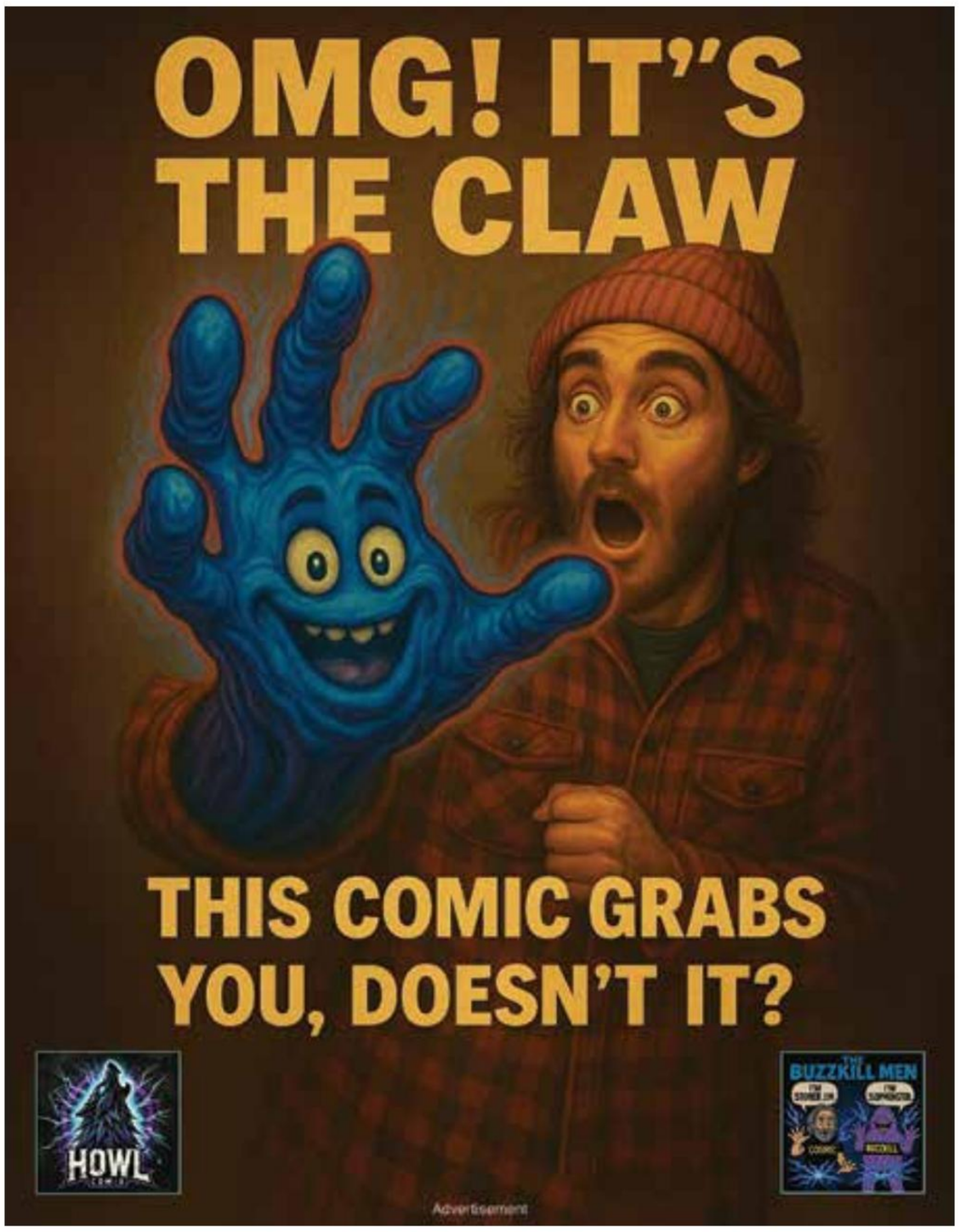


Feedback

Readers react to Mary Sheffield becoming the first woman to be elected mayor of Detroit. The City Council President defeated Rev. Solomon Kinloch Jr. in the Tuesday, Nov. 4 election.

Good things ahead! 👏
—@ashleyworden, Instagram

CONGRATULATIONS to DETROITS MAYOR @marysheffield 🔥🔥🔥🔥
—@cam_on_cam, Instagram

👏👏👏👏 So happy to see this
—@jenn_monsterr, Instagram

Congratulations to our new Mayor. Very proud 👍
—@cishelto123, Instagram

I love you, Detroit!!
—@saracmckay, Instagram

LETS GOOOOO!!!! 👏👏👏
—@marchcloverrr, Instagram

Wins big with embarrassingly low voter turn out.
—@themichiganmuse, Instagram

Low voter turnout is not a resounding victory. Mary is a Duggan plant and will continue to carry out his and the powers that be agenda for Detroit. Residents need to be aware this is not a win for them, this is a win for big business and to further destroy black dominance in Detroit.
—@kimberjay, Instagram

Who did this? Ppl need to vote for the most qualified not the most popular. Good luck to with that, Detroit!!
—@yourroyalhighness3073, Instagram

@yourroyalhighness3073 that's why she won. Her opponent had no political experience.
—@cleveland665, Instagram

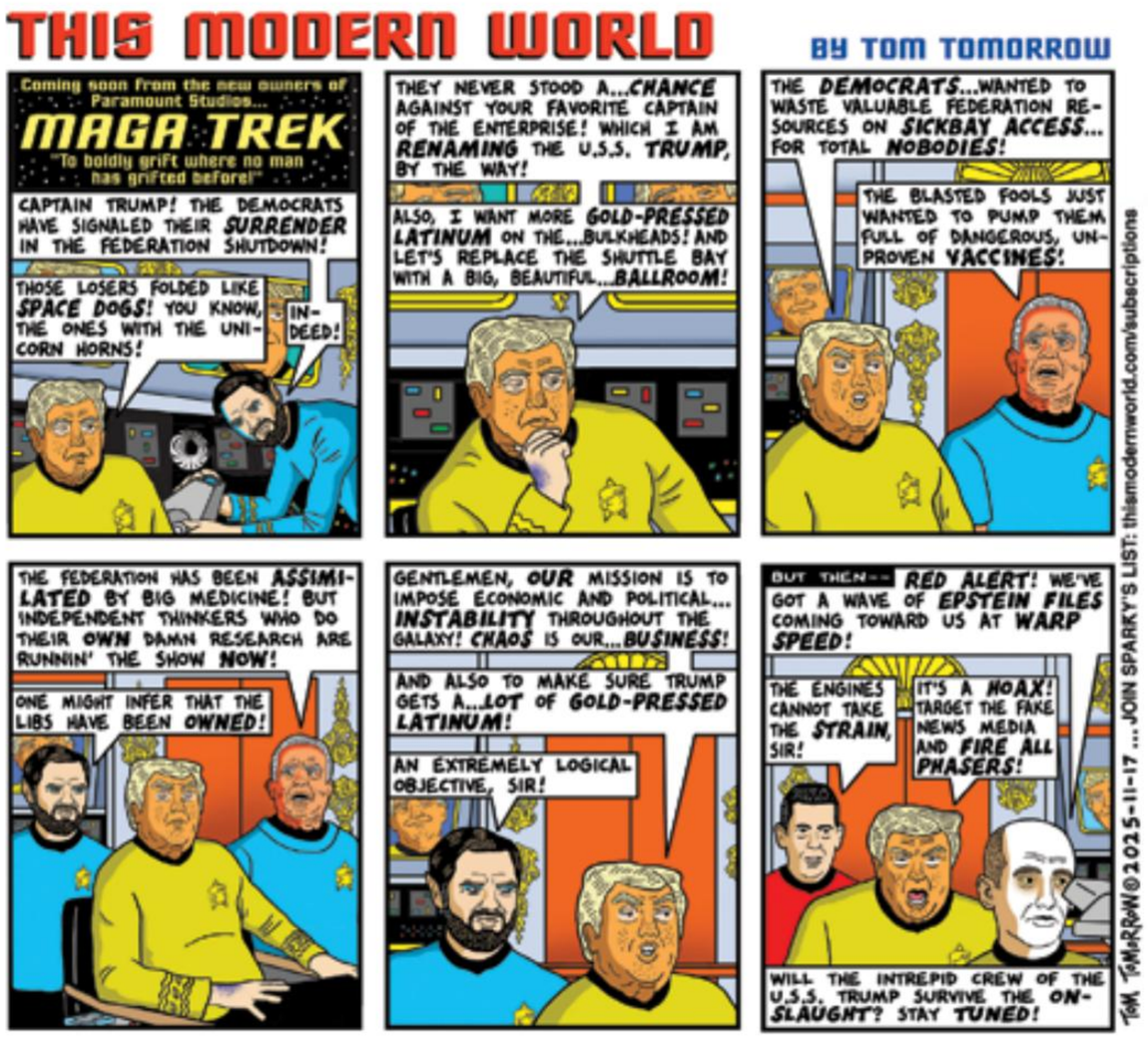
I feel she may sell the city out
—@niara247, Instagram

@niara247 She already has. She's aligned with the best of worst!
—@yourroyalhighness3073, Instagram

Just wanna know if you don't like mayor Sheffield. Then why did you want kinloch who had no experience
—@blaccadamdicaprio, Instagram

Let me guess... she's gonna fight like hell for... something.
—@captain.fantastic.100, Instagram

Have an opinion? Of course you do! Sound off: letters@metrotimes.com. MT


THIS MODERN WORLD
BY TOM TOMORROW
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"To boldly grift where no man has grifted before!"
CAPTAIN TRUMP! THE DEMOCRATS HAVE SIGNALED THEIR SURRENDER IN THE FEDERATION SHUTDOWN!
THOSE LOSERS FOLDED LIKE SPACE DOGS! YOU KNOW, THE ONES WITH THE UNICORN HORNS!
INDEED!
THEY NEVER STOOD A...CHANCE AGAINST YOUR FAVORITE CAPTAIN OF THE ENTERPRISE! WHICH I AM RENAMING THE U.S.S. TRUMP, BY THE WAY!
ALSO, I WANT MORE GOLD-PRESSED LATINUM ON THE...BULKHEADS! AND LET'S REPLACE THE SHUTTLE BAY WITH A BIG, BEAUTIFUL...BALLROOM!
THE DEMOCRATS...WANTED TO WASTE VALUABLE FEDERATION RESOURCES ON SICKBAY ACCESS... FOR TOTAL NOBODIES!
THE BLASTED FOOLS JUST WANTED TO PUMP THEM FULL OF DANGEROUS, UNPROVEN VACCINES!
THE FEDERATION HAS BEEN ASSIMILATED BY BIG MEDICINE! BUT INDEPENDENT THINKERS WHO DO THEIR OWN DAMN RESEARCH ARE RUNNIN' THE SHOW NOW!
ONE MIGHT INFER THAT THE LIBS HAVE BEEN OWNED!
GENTLEMEN, OUR MISSION IS TO IMPOSE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL... INSTABILITY THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY! CHAOS IS OUR...BUSINESS!
AND ALSO TO MAKE SURE TRUMP GETS A...LOT OF GOLD-PRESSED LATINUM!
AN EXTREMELY LOGICAL OBJECTIVE, SIR!
BUT THEN— RED ALERT! WE'VE GOT A WAVE OF EPSTEIN FILES COMING TOWARD US AT WARP SPEED!
THE ENGINES CANNOT TAKE THE STRAIN, SIR!
IT'S A HOAX! TARGET THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA AND FIRE ALL PHASERS!
WILL THE INTREPID CREW OF THE U.S.S. TRUMP SURVIVE THE ONSLAUGHT? STAY TUNED!
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WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
STONER JIM
SLOPMONSTER
WE WERE AT WOODSTOCK, MAN
THE WOODSTOCK REST HOME
MUSIC
LOVE
NOBODY READING THIS GIVES A SHIT
AT THE COFFEE SHOP
SENIOR CITIZEN ALERT!
OH NO, NOT AGAIN
WHEN YOU'RE TOO OLD TO MATTER
WHEN YOU'RE TOO OLD TO MATTER
You will cry too...
THE WOODSTOCK REST HOME
MUSIC
LOVE
When it happens to you–yeah, you.
IMAGINE!
I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE
METRO TIMES RAN THE NUMBERS... YOU ARE.
I'M STONER JIM.
I'M SLOPMONSTER.
COSMIC
BUZZKILL
WARNING SIGNS BUILD FOR MONTHS
YOU SHOULD KNOW, JIM.
FINAL COLLAPSE IS SUDDEN
WALK MY WALK– #1 AI-GENERATED HIT
I WALK MY WALK
NO, BRO, YOU'RE AI-GENERATED
FINALLY! THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL
Ai Ai, OH!
BY OLD McDONALD
GENERATED BY AI
BREAKING NEWS!
THIS BILLBOARD STOPS TIME
STONER JIM & SLOPMONSTER SAY:
READ METRO TIMES
HEY, UP HERE!
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State taxpayers have contributed more than $420 million toward U.S. military aid to Israel since 2023. VIOLA KLOCKO

Michigan lawmakers introduce resolutions urging Congress to block arms to Israel and aid Gaza

Michigan House Democrats are calling on Congress to halt weapons transfers to Israel and increase humanitarian aid to Gaza, pointing to the increasing civilian death toll and the impact the war has had on Palestinian families in the state.

Reps. Dylan Wegela of Garden City, Alabas Farhat of Dearborn, and Erin Byrnes of Dearborn on Nov. 12 introduced House Resolution 223, which urges Michigan's congressional delegation to stop sending U.S. arms to Israel, restore revoked visas for Palestinians seeking medical travel, and support an emergency surge of humanitarian assistance.

"For more than two years, the world has watched a livestreamed genocide," Wegela said. "Even after repeated ceasefire deals, Israel continues their escalation of their campaign to eliminate the Palestinian people. What makes that possible is American-supplied weapons."

The resolution was co-sponsored by 10 other Democrats: Emily Dievendorf of Lansing, Mike McFall of Hazel Park, Jimmie Wilson Jr. of Ypsilanti, Donavan McKinney of Detroit, Reggie Miller of Van Buren Township, Laurie Pohutsky of Livonia, Tonya Myers-Phillips of Detroit, Tyrone Carter of Detroit, Betsy Coffia of Traverse City, Carrie Rheingans of Ann Arbor, and Tullio Liberati of Allen Park.

The resolution comes after more than two years of Israeli airstrikes, ground operations, and a blockade that international aid groups say has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in decades. More than 69,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since 2023, according to Gaza health officials, and most of the dead are women and children. UNICEF, Doctors Without Borders, and the United Nations have warned that widespread hunger, medical shortages, and the destruction of hospitals have left the population facing mass starvation.

Michigan's large Arab American population, including the country's highest concentration of residents with Lebanese and Palestinian heritage, has watched the war with grief and panic as relatives in Gaza and southern Lebanon have been killed or displaced. Dearborn, where Farhat and Byrnes represent major sections of the city, has held regular demonstrations calling for a ceasefire and an end to U.S. military support.

"For many families in my district, this is not abstract, people are losing loved ones in Gaza and in South Lebanon, and they're watching it happen with their own taxpayer dollars," Farhat said. "Imagine knowing that your hard earned money is being used to kill your relatives. This resolution reflects our community's moral and democratic mandate: stop funding weapons that are killing civilians. Our communities want peace, accountability, and policy that values human life and this resolution moves us in that direction."

Farhat also pointed to polls that have "clearly shown that most Americans want our government to stop fueling the suffering in Gaza and to take real steps toward ending this war."

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who was born in Detroit to Palestinian immigrants and is the only Palestinian American member of Congress, introduced a resolution on Nov. 14 that "officially recognizes that the Israeli government has committed the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza." The resolution also urges the U.S. to fulfill its obligations under the Genocide Convention to intervene and seek accountability.

"The Israeli government's genocide in Gaza has not ended, and it will not end until we act," Tlaib, D-Detroit, said. "Since the so-called 'ceasefire' was announced, Israeli forces haven't stopped killing Palestinians. Impunity only enables more atrocity. As our government continues to send a blank check for war crimes and ethnic cleansing, Palestinian children's smiles are extinguished by bombs and bullets that say made in the U.S.A. To end this horror, we must reject genocide denial and follow our binding legal obligations under the Genocide Convention to take immediate action to pursue justice and accountability to prevent and punish the crime of genocide."

Michigan taxpayers have contributed more than $420 million toward U.S. military aid to Israel since 2023, Wegela said, noting the money could instead fund rent assistance, groceries for low-income households, teacher salaries, children's health care, or student loan relief.

"Instead of using tax dollars to help improve lives here, our federal government is funding a Genocide on the other side of the world. It is our moral obligation to oppose funding the mass murder of civilians," Wegela said.

Byrnes condemned the high civilian casualty rate in Gaza, which is estimated to be roughly 83% of those killed, and criticized Secretary of State Marco Rubio's move to suspend medical visas for Palestinians injured in the conflict.

"Michigan cannot remain silent while our tax dollars are used to fund genocide," Byrnes said.

The resolution also points to growing documentation from humanitarian groups and international law experts alleging that Israel's blockade, bombing campaign, and forced displacement of civilians may violate the Genocide Convention.

Michigan organizers praised the lawmakers' resolution. Layla Elabed, a well-known community organizer from Dearborn and sister of Tlaib, said the resolution represents "a multifaith, multicultural, multigenerational coalition refusing to let Michigan be complicit in genocide."

Barbara Weinberg Barefield of Jewish Voice for Peace–Detroit said the suffering in Gaza contradicts the core Jewish teaching that "whoever saves a single life is considered to have saved the whole world."

"The fact that a genocide is being perpetrated by the government of Israel on the Palestinian people is horrifying to me as a human being and as a Jew who was taught the intrinsic value of every life," she said. "I will not stand by and let thousands of lives extinguished in my name go unchallenged."

The resolution is nonbinding but adds pressure to Michigan members of Congress, several of whom have faced protests over U.S. military aid. It cites longstanding federal laws prohibiting arms transfers to countries committing human rights violations and calls on Washington to "use every tool available" to stop the killing and ensure aid reaches civilians.

Wegela, Farhat, and Byrnes said they plan to continue working with local advocacy groups, including those representing Palestinian, Arab American, Jewish, and peace coalitions, as the measure moves through the House.

—Steve Neavling

A racist provocateur tried to manufacture chaos in Dearborn

Right-wing provocateur and avowed racist Jake Lang arrived in Dearborn last Tuesday with a bulletproof vest, a Quran he threatened to burn, and a bag of bacon he shoved into people's faces.

The Florida man also brought a criminal history: The Jan. 6 rioter was charged with repeatedly beating police officers with a baseball bat and riot shield, and a federal judge found that he "remains willing to engage in additional acts of violence." President Donald Trump pardoned him and the other insurrectionists.

That's who marched into a peaceful, largely Arab American city and tried to start a fight.

Lang, a Jewish Christian who openly calls himself a racist, came to Dearborn with a small crew of followers and a camera. His goal wasn't dialogue or protest. It was provocation, panic, and propaganda. And when Muslims and their supporters shouted back after he spent hours taunting them, he plastered social media with videos claiming he'd uncovered a "violent Muslim stronghold." His livestreams racked up more than 200,000 views in half a day, with many sympathizing with him.

It was a textbook use of DARVO, a manipulation tactic defined as "Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender." First, the aggressor provokes and antagonizes. Then he denies wrongdoing, attacks those who push back, and reframes himself as the persecuted victim. Lang executed it step by step.

Lang and his handful of supporters began congregating early in the afternoon, schlepping a banner reading, "Americans Against Islamification" and large, wooden crosses. He mocked the Arabic language. He told Muslims they were "violent, disgusting people," waved bacon in their faces, and repeatedly used the n-word. He told one group they were "chimping out" and made monkey noises at teenagers.

He threatened to burn a Quran.

He prayed for God to "remove Muslims."

He declared Dearborn a "Christian country."

He called white people who supported their neighbors "white traitors."

He wasn't hiding who he was. At one point he said outright: "I am a racist because I don't want other races taking over my country." He then launched into a white nationalist rant about whites having "conquered" America.

As the march moved toward Dearborn City Hall, Lang ranted that "this is not America," that Muslims "want us all dead," and that the city was an "insurgency." Despite all the taunting, he put on a performance of contrived innocence for the camera, repeatedly insisting he was shocked by how he was being treated.

The media treated the debacle like a debate instead of an ambush, calling the rally "dueling demonstrations" and a "debate over religion." One headline attempted to summarize the day as putting "focus on the Muslim community," as if a racist agitator threatening to burn a Quran is a legitimate point of civic discussion.

This is the problem with both-sides framing: It pretends the issue is religious disagreement rather than a violent Jan. 6 defendant traveling to a diverse city to harass residents and film their reactions. Dearborn's 106,000 residents include Christians, Muslims, and non-religious people. Sharia law has never been practiced there, nor could it be, legally. About half the city's residents aren't Muslim. But Lang's stunt relied on Americans who don't know that.

The performance worked on many viewers, who appeared convinced they were watching an Islamic uprising.

Among the responses:

"Islam is robbing our country of unity."

"They are a disgrace."

"God asks us to stand up and fight against people who are his enemies."

"Jesus said to the bad people like these 'You vipers, you son of snakes.'"

This is all a bastardization of Christianity. It's weaponized faith used as a racial weapon, not unlike American southerners who justified slavery by citing the Bible.

Later, as some young Muslims shouted back after two hours of taunts, insults, and monkey noises, Lang grinned at the camera. This was the moment he came for.

"The Muslim community is looking to drag us back," he said. "They're looking to destroy everything that makes America great."

Outside City Hall as the sky grew dark, white police officers offered Lang's group a protected space cordoned off by metal barriers. Lang scanned the crowd and said, "If they're white and dressed normally, they're allowed in."

During a public comment period at the council meeting, Lang whined that the white population is "on the decline."

He told the council and other Muslims, "You will never look like us. You will never eat like us. You won't build buildings like us. You are nothing. You can build nothing. Just like President Trump's great American friends have said: You guys are not us and get the fuck out."

Then he raised his fist and said, "America first, America only, God bless America, Jesus is king."

In a triumphant tweet afterward, he wrote: "Today we showed THE WORLD just how VIOLENT and disgusting the Muslim Stronghold of Dearborn TRULY IS!! I was assaulted dozens of times by little twig Pedolphile worshipping Muslims."

Lang's behavior in Dearborn wasn't unlike some of the conduct that landed him in federal custody. Prosecutors say he played a front-line role in the Jan. 6 attack, hitting officers with a bat and riot shield. He publicly declared that the Capitol riot was justified and said the "next step" was "guns."

A federal judge found "overwhelming evidence" that he remains willing to commit violence, yet he continues to cast himself as a political prisoner. And now he's acting like the victim of a city he visited to antagonize.

Can you imagine if a group of Muslims showed up in a small Christian town to scream racial slurs, taunt teenagers, threaten to burn Bibles, and declare the area "Islam?" You can bet the reaction wouldn't be peaceful.

Dearborn residents saw what Lang was doing. The cameras saw what he wanted them to see.

And the rest of us should see it for what it is. It was not a protest, not a clash of cultures, but a racist agitator manufacturing chaos to feed his movement and his ego.

—Steve Neavling

Theater company A Host of People acquires former church

Since 2014, Detroit-based A Host of People has produced ensemble theater in venues across the Motor City and beyond. And soon, the theater company hopes to have a home of its own.

On Nov. 15, AHOP announced it has acquired a 14,000-square-foot vacant church located at 6000 30th St. on the city's west side. The company held a reveal party in a heated tent where they hosted performances and offered attendees flashlight-led tours of the building, which it hopes to rehab by late 2026 or early 2027.

The plan is to transform the building into not just a performance space for its own productions but a community resource with a rehearsal studio, shared workspace, and a shop. The project is anticipated to cost more than $1 million.

The company was founded by co-directors Sherrine Azab and Jake Hooker, who partnered with ensemble member Dorothy Melander-Dayton to acquire and develop the venue.

Azab and Hooker moved to Detroit in 2012 and held the first AHOP production at the Play House near Hamtramck in 2014. Since then, the group has produced nearly 10 full-length performances and toured them to cities across the country, including Chicago, New Orleans, and San Francisco.

The group describes itself as creating "multimedia theater for social change," utilizing digital projections for its productions including subtitles for non-English performances.

"Our general kind of vibe is that we're really into 'multi,'" says Hooker. "Multimedia, multicultural, multiracial, multi... gender! It's not just about inclusivity, but it's also about reflecting the world that we live in."

The group says having a dedicated space will help it focus on their art.

"It's been a long time coming," Azab says. "We've been making work in Detroit for over a decade without a place to produce that work. We have a rehearsal studio in our home ... but we've been producing and showing our work all across the city, a lot of the time turning DIY spaces into theaters. And I think it's great that we've been able to connect with a lot of communities, but I think it's also been a hindrance to us for growing our organization without having roots in one place — where people can identify that as where A Host of People is. After 10 years of making art, there are folks who have never heard of us because we don't have a home or roots."

Melander-Dayton, who moved to Detroit in 2015 and began working with AHOP shortly after as a designer, says she approached the group to partner on the venue.

"We've spent a lot of time and effort turning spaces that aren't theaters into theaters for a show, so that's a lot of our time and budget," she says, adding, "I think it's going to be really transformative for the art of the company."

With a dedicated space, AHOP says it will be able to hold multi-week theatrical runs for its own productions as well

as its youth group, the La Carpa Teen Ensemble.

AHOP says it hopes the new venue will solve problems not only for the group but others in the city as well.

"It'll be our home," Azab says. "But because we make works from scratch, we only do about two shows a year. So there's plenty of time for other folks to be able to use the space as well."

"Our problem is not unique," Melander-Dayton says. "There are lots of groups in this city who are doing really cool work, but they're working in less than ideal circumstances a lot of the time ... I think this will hopefully impact not just us but a lot of other folks to be able to make more new work and to be able to more fully explore their ideas and create potential."

The group has partnered with local firm 1+1+ Architects to develop the space. Architect Laura Marie Peterson, who has previously worked on the Dreamtroit artist community in the city, says the building has an interesting history.

Its cornerstone was laid in 1949, and it was once home to the New Light Baptist Church and Burnette Baptist Church. In 1970, Stevie Wonder married singer Syreeta Wright here, and most recently the building's previous owner had been trying to redevelop it for a Mexican dance hall.

She says much of the redevelopment will be in bringing the building up to code.

"The building doesn't have any heating, cooling, plumbing, or electric," she says. "A lot of the design is just getting all that stuff up to speed. ... It's really, humble project. We're just trying to get it operational."

Still, there will be some fun design flourishes. Peterson plans to create windows made from glass blocks with motifs that will reflect different groups of people that call Detroit home, including symbols from the Underground Railroad as well as from Mexican and Arab cultures.

"It's meant to represent that everyone is welcome in the space," she says.

A Host of People is seeking funding and has already secured some support from the Gilbert Family Foundation.

The team says once the project is complete, it will usher in a new era for the organization.

"We are a small organization," Azab says. "We have the knowledge and the expertise to do this, but we haven't had the means."

"We really are thinking about it as a community arts venue for professional, high-quality rigorous work that's also open, accessible, usable, friendly, and warm," Hooker says. "I mean, we are called A Host of People, and we really believe in hosting people. And now we will have a spot to host people."

—Lee DeVito MT

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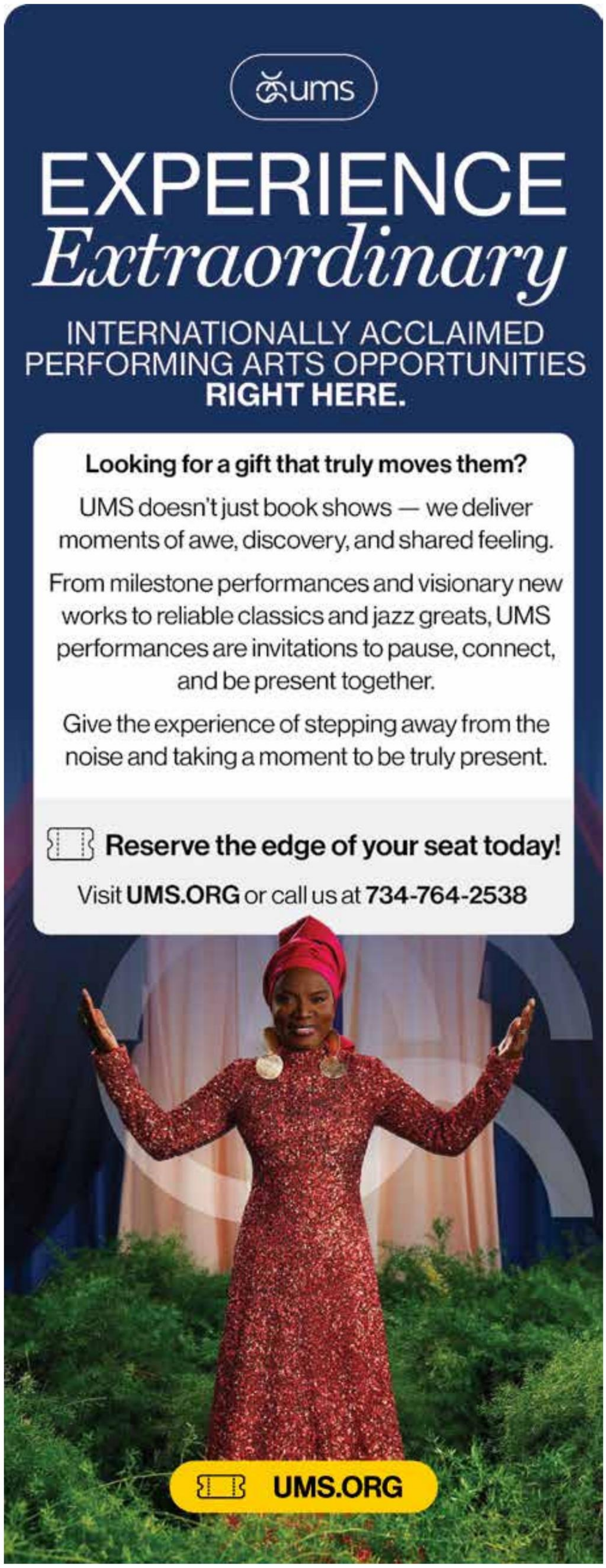
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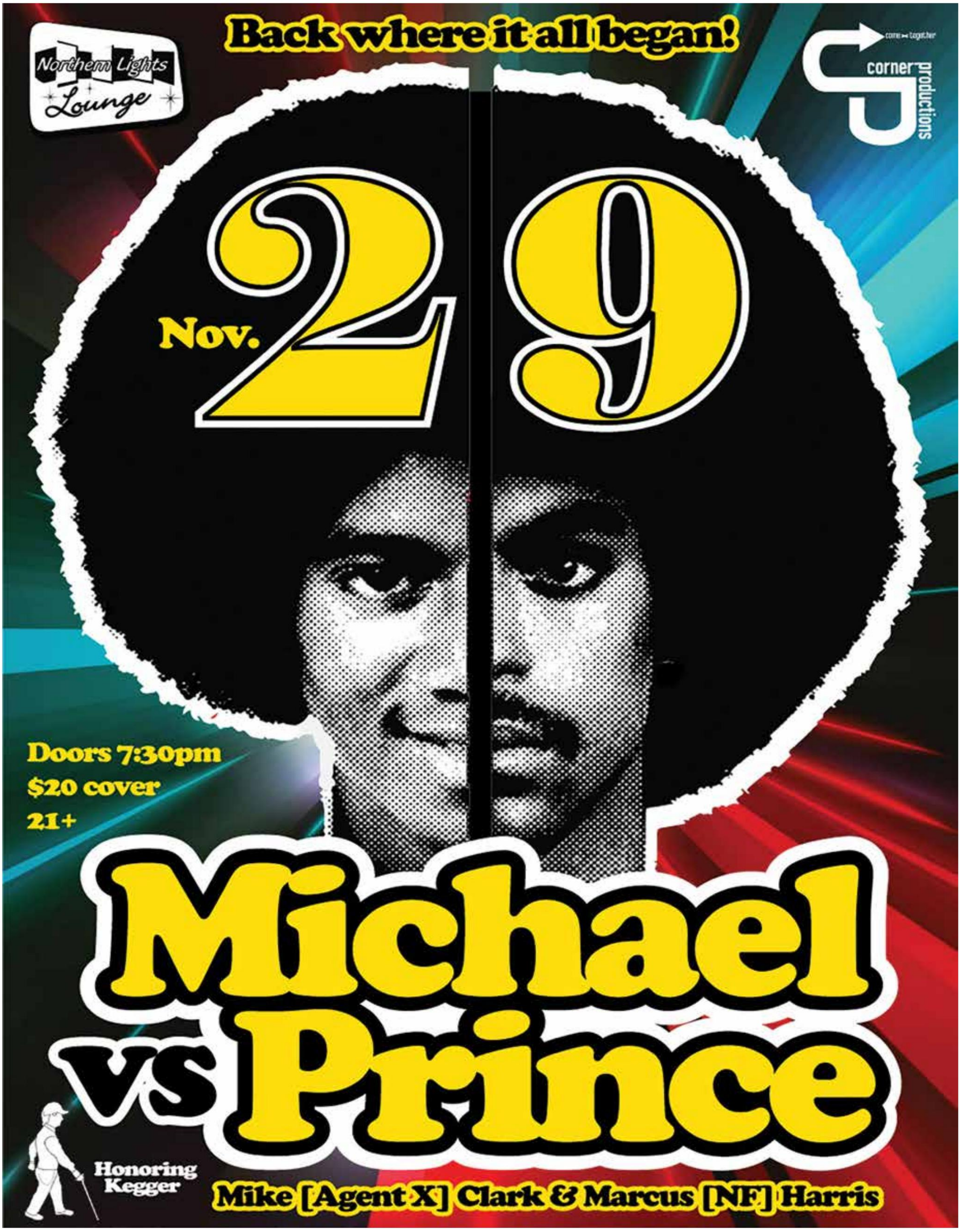
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CRAFTERS CONNECTION

THE MAKERS, THE DREAMERS, AND DUCF

NEXT WEEKEND MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DETROIT URBAN CRAFT FAIR

BY JEFF MILO

Stop us if you've heard this one before: Two crafters walk into a bar late at night. One's got some T-shirts, and one's got some stained glass. For both of them, already, this is more than just a hobby.

Twenty years later, they're successfully living their scrappy dreams, having helped to build a community 100-crafters strong, and about to swing open big heavy doors to let in a weekend's cascade of holiday shoppers sure to surpass 10,000 into a space that's as big as an NHL hockey rink, chock-full of diverse and multi-generational makers, artists, and fellow dreamers.

"It's just one giant party," says Bethany Nixon, owner of Reware Vintage in Berkley and cofounder of Handmade Detroit, the organization that hosts next weekend's Detroit Urban Craft Fair, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. "[It's] a party of creative people and people who love creative people — it's such a celebration of the things that people in the metro Detroit area make, and I'm just so happy to be part of it."

This holiday season, Detroit Urban Craft Fair returns Dec. 6-7 to the Drill Hall inside Detroit's historic Masonic Temple, allowing shoppers to discover and connect with local makers and one-of-a-kind finds, while enjoying festive (and often eclectic) holiday music and family-friendly crafts. For many, it's an opportunity to get the entire season's worth of shopping done in one day, and on a budget to boot. It's also a chance to be outright charmed by copious amounts of crafters and their personalities.

"It's that buzz of Christmas morning," says Carey Gustafson, owner of Glass Action! Studio in Oak Park, the other cofounder of Handmade Detroit. "It's that energy of making your way through the house and peeking around the corner and getting your eyes on that lit tree and those extra boxes that weren't there the day before — that sense of wonder and excitement is the energy I feel when we open those doors, when this weekend kicks off!"

THE BIG WEEKEND

Once November hits, the entirety of Nixon and Gustafson's weekends, as well as their weeknights, are consumed by a focus on prep. "We've joked for years," Nixon says, "that our unofficial motto is 'no sleep till DUCF' because there's always so much to do, so many things to take care of before the big weekend." She adds that the night before can be summed up as "a lot of nervousness and excitement and coffee combined all into one."

Gustafson describes the two weeks leading up to DUCF as akin to "those dreams where you fall and then jerk yourself awake, like you're gonna fall out of bed. Albeit, after all these years, we do have a skeletal framework to plan from, but each year all the line-items from that format are different. We know what we're doing and how it's going to look, and feel; the anticipation is amazing, but then there's so many other 'oh no's and 'what's that' and 'what just happened' and 'is this OK' and 'are they coming'... which totally keeps us on our toes."

Each year, several Handmade Detroit staff members and volunteers assist Nixon and Gustafson in coordinating the load in and arrangement of more than 100 vendors, each bringing their own unique parameters for their spaces and booths, and all of them stylishly shambling up into the Masonic Temple's third floor mezzanine via elevators built in the 1920s — several on different timelines and schedules, steadily navigating into a 17,000-square-foot space designed for military marching band rehearsals like a giant game of *Tetris*.

"And then there's sponsors, and caterers, and our DJ, it's a lot of cogs," says Nixon. "Every person plays a part. It's almost like a giant band or orchestra, playing together and making some beautiful things happen."

Gustafson describes the week leading up to "the show" as a chaotic ballet, with "everything from calls for all-hands-on-deck to rolly carts zooming around, to last-minute parking strategies, and then all of our vendors start arriving." Gustafson says that it always works out, but then again, sometimes there's stuff they just can't predict.

"Doing a show for such a small window of time at one of the most iconic buildings in the city presents a lot of unknowns," says Gustafson. "We can plan down to the tiniest minutiae of what we need but sometimes we show up and there are parties booked, or weddings happening, or one year, [in 2012] Eminem decided to shoot a music video in the cathedral theatre downstairs for that entire week! When [the Masonic] gets that kind of call, that slightly shifts what we're walking into. But we love the Masonic, we wouldn't go back year after year if they weren't absolutely incredible to work with."

CRAFTING AND PUNK GO HAND-IN-HAND

Handmade Detroit started when five women, each crafters with unique modalities, styles, and backgrounds, met in 2004 inside the Garden Bowl during a local vintage market pop-up known as Baar Bazaar. That's where Nixon and Gustafson met Lish Dorset, Stephanie Tardy Duimstra, and Amy Cronkite, along with her husband Ethan. "I was so excited to meet other similar women and just wanted to be friends with them," says Nixon. "They were all already working on the idea of [DUCF] by the time I met them, and asked me if I wanted to be a part of it. For me, all of this started from just wanting to be a part of the creative community in Detroit."

Nixon was always making things as a kid, walking to the now-bygone Frank's Nursery in Sterling Heights after school to buy craft supplies with allowance money. "One day my brother gave me a stack of records and said I should do something with them — I decided to make notebooks with them," she says. Nixon also credits a "crafty" cousin who was an antiques dealer, introducing her to eBay in 1998, "which is how I got started selling vintage band T-shirts," she says. "I had literally just launched my website [rewarevintage.

A vendor at the Detroit Urban Craft Fair. DOUG COOMBE

The Detroit Urban Craft Fair draws shoppers in search of unique gifts to the Masonic Temple. DOUG COOMBE

com] the week before I met all the Detroit Urban Craft Fair ladies."

Speaking of band T-shirts, Nixon says, "it's really music that brings us all together." The milieu of the Garden Bowl and its usual clientele during the first assemblage of what became Handmade Detroit, vending their wares on checkered linoleum floors as local and touring bands lugged amps up to the upstairs Magic Stick, manifested a mash-up of vintage shoppers and music fans that felt, perhaps unsurprisingly, harmonious.

"For me it's always been about my family's love of music and of making things that shaped the rest of my life," Nixon says. "And I've personally always considered DIY and crafting to be an element of punk — I think the two go hand-in-hand. You see so much in common in those scenes. It was happenstance because I had gone to the Garden Bowl for a Raveonettes concert and the very first Baar Bazaar just happened to be that night, so there were all these people slinging handmade things."

"Handmade Detroit felt like being in a band," Gustafson says. "Everyone had a skill they were best at, and they were the ones that did that for the group." Gustafson did play in a couple bands around the scene in the early 2000s, but her creative life started with drawing as a child, particularly portraiture. Gustafson nearly graduated late from high school because "I had too many art credits — I had to make-up an algebra class." After high school, she freelanced for and then was hired by a stained glass company that needed someone who could draw. The rest, essentially, is history, leading to Glass Action's now two-decade run of stained glass design and repair, as well as classes.

On the nature of scrappy, DIY-punk energy, Gustafson says, "we were young and just inside of so many different threads of so many different communities going on — there was always someone to grab to help or someone to host something. And in Detroit, no one waits for a handout — you find a way to make that costume, make that party, you don't wait, you go make something! So we wanted to develop a system so that crafters would have an opportunity to make a little extra cash, to work toward something, and sometimes something on a calendar can get you motivated."

Handmade Detroit hosted its own large-scale pop-up with 53 vendors inside the Majestic Theater in 2006: thus the Detroit Urban Craft Fair was born. Nixon says the initial intent was to pick a name that implied that this wasn't your Grandma's craft show, but their initial pick of "Detroit Indie Craft Fair" led to an acronym that sounded too close to an inappropriate word.

"We were scrappy kids," Nixon says. "We made pins to sell for fundraising to cover our expenses for putting on the show. But after that first DUCF, all five of us were just smiling the entire damn night. It was so fun to see it come together — the community that embraced it and local press covering it — it was just this little idea that started in a bar."

TRADITION AND ENDURANCE

Twenty years ago, yeah, eBay was a thing, and Etsy was just kind of getting started, but DUCF was growing in a pre-Pinterest world, long before the "shop small" mentality and "buy local" campaigns gained ground. Sheesh, forget about a Linktree — the women of Handmade Detroit were on Myspace, and just happy to have their own PayPals.

What keeps an endeavor like DUCF going strong, Nixon says, is community. It's more than Modge Podge or Washi Tape that helps crafters stick together. There's, if you will, a common thread: "It really is a community," Nixon says. "I think when you're so passionate about your art, your craft, and you meet other people who might do something completely different but also creative — sharing that passion causes instant community. Every year, we meet new people in the creative community, and it's like each year we're throwing a party: 'come meet our new friends and see what they do!'"

"It's counter culture, too" Gustafson says, calling back to Nixon's punk reference. "Handmade Detroit survived the recession, then we pivoted through the pandemic, and a couple of pretty tumultuous political climates, but shopping local, supporting local, that always resonates because it's real. Museums are full of folk art, from thousands of years of people making and expressing themselves through handiwork. Some people love it, some don't understand it, but what we've found with this show is that we have the best shoppers in the nation."

"The people who come out to shop [at DUCF] are so warm and thoughtful and excited," Gustafson says. "We do get some who elbow each other and say, 'oh YOU could make that,' but it's rare."

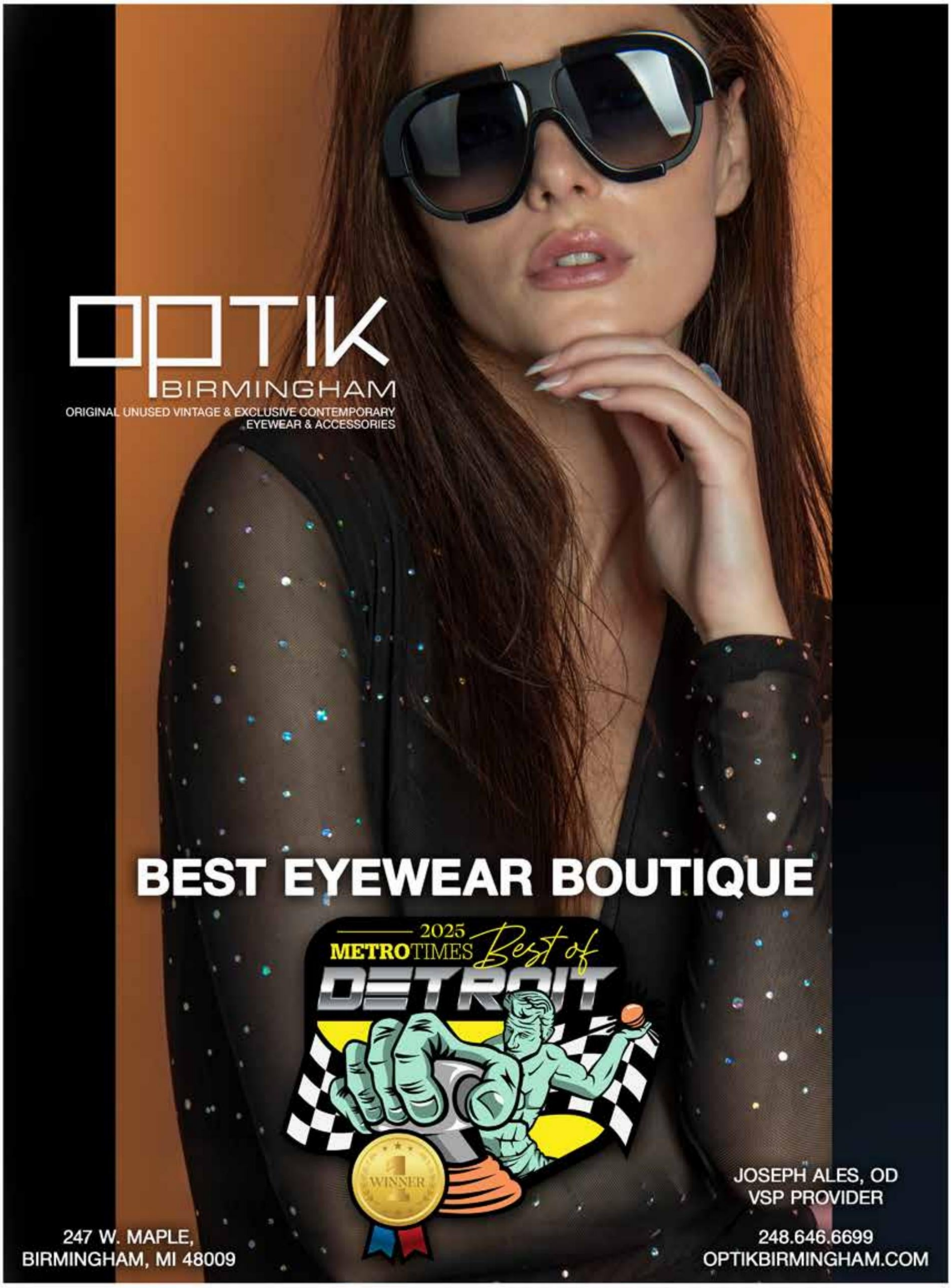
What's not rare is repeat customers. "Its a tradition for so many people, now," Nixon says. "We hear it over and over, that it's become a tradition that's part of the holiday season for families, couples, friends to come to DUCF. We had someone tell us that their friends group went every single year together, but that when one of them moved across the country, they decided that she would fly home *for* DUCF, so that she could still be part of that tradition. That made me tear up."

Doors open next at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, a time "designed for our serious shoppers," Gustafson says, as they'll not only get first dibs on the work, but also the chance at "swag bags" for the first 50 guests through the door. The afternoon is an ideal time for family visitors, with auxiliary "kids zone" craft activities and plenty of food vendors, then the night leans into a "party atmosphere." Sunday evening wraps with a "dance party" led by DJ Dave Lawson and his quirky Christmas 45s.

"At DUCF, there's truly something for everybody," Gustafson says. "It's this cross-pollination of generations and vibes and themes and interests and kitsch. And you can see the quality in the work. It's just so exciting every year to see the show come together." MT

The Detroit Urban Craft Fair runs from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7; Masonic Temple, 500 Temple St., Detroit; detroiturbancraftfair.com. Cover is $5 (no cover for children under 12 after 1 p.m.)

The DUCF has a punk rock vibe. DOUG COOMBE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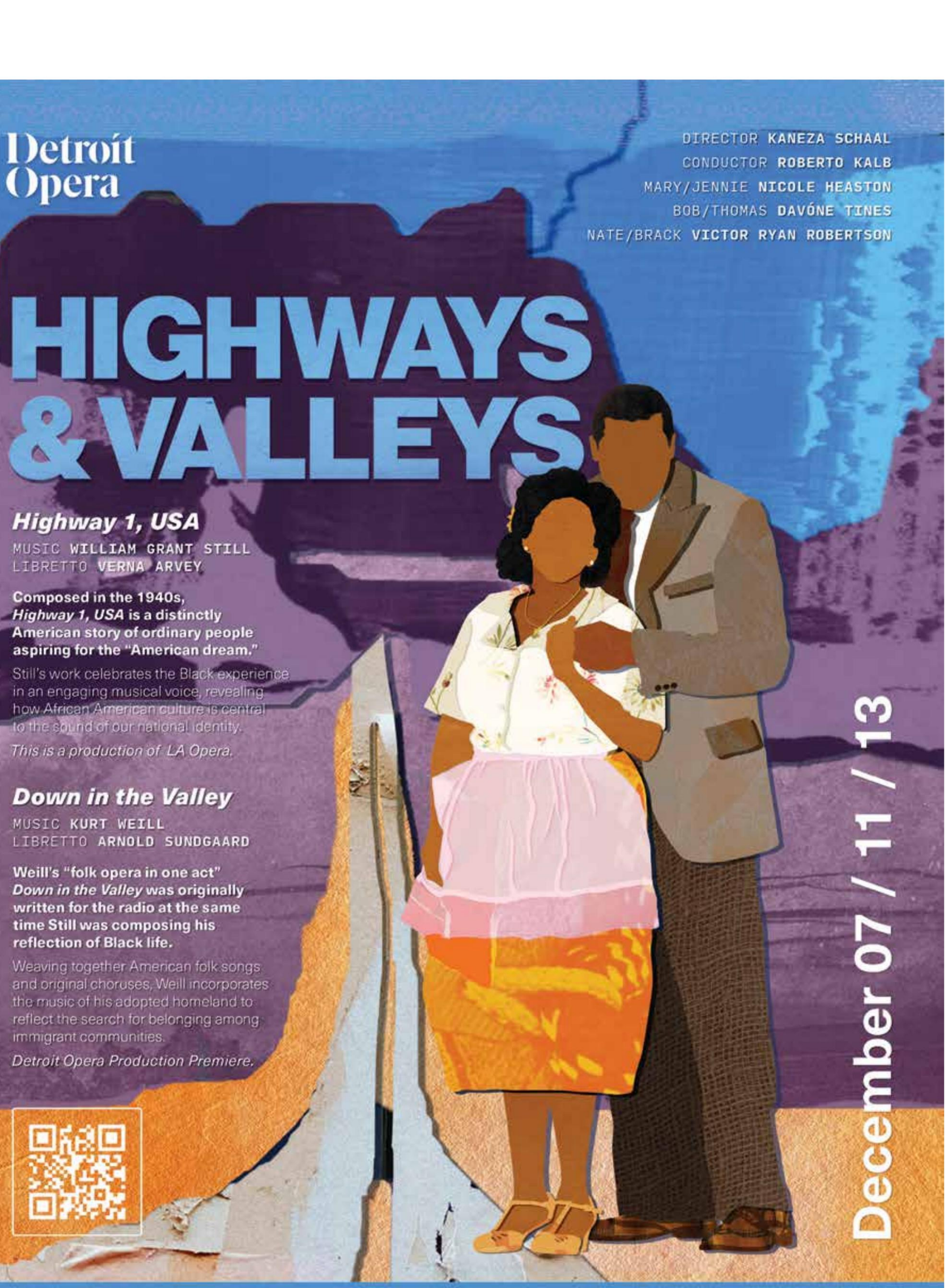

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WHAT'S GOING ON

Holiday Shopping at Hudson's

In its heyday, Detroit's former J.L. Hudson Department Store was the local destination for holiday shopping and one of the largest in the U.S., underscored by the oversized American flag that used to be hung from the building during the Thanksgiving Day parade. This season, the newly completed Hudson's site tower is bringing holiday shopping back with vendor kiosks, window displays, coffee and pastries, and even the return of Hudson's collectable "Santa Bear" teddy bears. A new bear will be available in honor of building owner Dan Gilbert's late son Nick, who died in 2023 of complications from neurofibromatosis, with proceeds benefiting NFX and The Gilly Project.

Programming through Jan. 4; see hudsons-detroit.com/holidays for full schedule.

Royal Oak Holidays

Downtown Royal Oak lights up with holiday cheer including a Christmas tree, ice rink, carnival rides, ice sculptures, roasting marshmallows, and two weekends of gift shopping. More than a dozen vendors will be on hand, including 404 Industries, Blu Jean Blues, By Dana Ash, DD Knits, Fiber Magic Alpacas, Give Thanks Bakery, Mino Wantanabe, Pet Wants Chesterfield, Piekny Polish Pottery Store, Pingree Detroit, Sidetrack Bookshop, SMPL Tallow, Sugared by KB, Sunday Fox Candles, and The Office Coffee Shop. There will also be community drives benefiting the Metro Detroit Youth Club and The Bottomless Toy Chest.

From Friday, Dec. 5-Sunday, Dec. 7 and Friday, Dec. 12-Sunday, Dec. 14; Centennial Commons, Royal Oak; royaloakholidays.com. No cover.

Royal Oak Holidays Cookie Crawl

Attendees can explore and shop in downtown Royal Oak while collecting unique, handcrafted cookies and other sweet treats from 18 local businesses. Starting at Stagecrafters, attendees will receive a Cookie Pass, map, and Cookie Tin to store them in, with participating stops including Astoria, Five 15, Nutri-

Hudson's Detroit. COURTESY PHOTO

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From noon-4 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6; downtown Royal Oak; hroyaloakholidays.com/cookie-crawl. Registration is $30.

Merry Midtown

With Detroit's long-standing Noel Night canceled this year as organizers reimagine its future, Midtown Detroit, Inc. is bringing festive cheer to the neighborhood with Merry Midtown, a special holiday shopping and community celebration. Created in collaboration with City Bird, the event will showcase more than 40 local businesses offering deals, activities, and family-friendly fun. Visitors can enjoy holiday DJ sets and a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus at City Bird, explore a pop-up market of over 10 artists at Third Street Bar, browse a vinyl bazaar and catch a live set from DJ Ghostropolis at Third Man Records, and get crafty with ornament decorating and gift wrapping at Roar Brewing Company.

From 5–9 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, in Midtown, Detroit; citybirddetroit.com/events. No cover.

12 Days of GRiZMAS

Detroit-born sax-playing electronic artist GRiZ is celebrating 10 years of GRiZMAS, a beloved holiday series that has grown from a small grassroots effort into a major tradition, raising more than $750,000 to support music education for local youth. This year's celebration features an expanded GRiZMAS Workshop at 160 W. Fort Street, open daily and offering exclusive merchandise, a limited-edition coffee collaboration, and donation opportunities including a coat drive and raffle. The 12-day lineup brings back fan favorites such as the Roller Disco, Charity Yoga, GRiZMAS Live Jam, and community ice skating at Campus Martius, all supporting charity partner Seven Mile, which provides free music education to Detroit students. It's all capped off with a pair of performances by GRiZ at the Masonic Temple On Friday, Dec. 19 and Saturday, Dec. 20.

Starts on Tuesday, Dec. 9; various venues, full schedule at 12daysofgrizmas.com. MT

Royal Oak Holidays. COURTESY PHOTO

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WHAT'S GOING ON CONT'D

Wednesday Nov 26

Live/Concert

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Magic Bag Presents:Thanskgiving Is Still Murder-Smiths United, Sanctuary and Age of Disorder 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Night Before Thanksgiving Party! 8-10 pm; Syndicate Ferndale, 140 Vester Ave., Ferndale; 0.00.

Sessions @ The Vinyl Society 8-11 pm; Vinyl Society, 1427 Randolph Street, Detroit; Free.

Set It Off: The Self Titled Tour 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Stone Clover 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

THE KOFFIN KATS ▪ Against The Grain ▪ The Rumours ▪ Newburgh 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Waterparks w/ Chloe Moriondo 6 pm; Detroit Masonic Temple Library, 500 Temple St, Detroit;

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Sessions @ The Vinyl Society 8-11 pm; Vinyl Society, 1427 Randolph Street, Detroit; Free.

DJ/Dance

Planet Funk 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Together In Thanks 5-10 pm; MDK on the River, 9008 Grand River Ave, Detroit; Free.

Way Back Wednesdays w. DJ Righteous 8 am-11:59 pm; New Dodge Lounge, 8850 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; 5.

Karaoke/Open Mic

Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Hump Day Karaoke & Music Trivia 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Thursday Nov 27

Live/Concert

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

DJ/Dance

Curated Cool 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Karaoke/Open Mic

Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Drag Queen Karaoke 8 pm-2 am; Woodward Avenue Brewers, 22646 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; no cover.

Elixer: DJs John Ryan and GEO 8 pm-midnight; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; No cover.

Friday Nov 28

Live/Concert

Algernon Cadwallader 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Dying Wish & Static Dress 5:30 & 6 pm; The Shelter, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

FREE retro rockabilly dance party w/ Atomic Bombcatz & DJ Del Villareal @ LIVE Ann Arbor 6-9 pm; LIVE Ann Arbort, 301 W Huron St., Ann Arbor; free.

Larry McCray 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Leon Thomas - Mutts Don't Heel Tour 7 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

Saddle Up Black Friday! 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

The Tenors: Joy To The World Tour 8 pm; Caesars Palace Windsor - Augustus Ballroom, 377 E. Riverside Dr., Windsor;

UNCLE KRACKER 6 pm; District 142, 142 Maple St., Wyandotte;

Vitriol, Weeping 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

DJ/Dance

Bassonic Temple with Zeds Dead (16+) 7:30 pm and 7:30 pm; Detroit Masonic Temple Library, 500 Temple St, Detroit;

Open Air Fridays 4-10 pm; Woodbridge Pub, 5169 Trumbull St., Detroit; 0.

Saddle Up Black Friday! 8 pm-2 am; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville; Ladies FREE Before 10PM.

Saturday Nov 29

Live/Concert

98 Degrees 8 pm; Fisher Theatre - Detroit, 3011 West Grand & Fisher, Detroit;

All Black Attire Party 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

ANTHONY GOMES 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Band of Skulls - COLD FAME TOUR 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Bloody Run, Shobijin, Rainnapper, Lucius Fox, Lanternfly 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Brandy & Monica: The Boy Is Mine Tour 8 pm; Little Caesars Arena, 2645 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

FinalBossFight! 'THE LIFE OF MY DREAMS' RELEASE SHOW w/ Former Critics, Leisure Hour, Potionseller 7 pm; Pike Room, 1 S. Saginaw, Pontiac;

HURTBOX | UNCHAINED TAKEOVERS PART II 10 pm; Tangent Gallery, 715 E Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit;

Magic Bag Presents: D.M. vs NIN 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Memphis May Fire 7 pm; Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit; 32.50.

Raekwon & Mobb Deep - 30th Anniversary Tour 7 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

Xzibit 6 pm; Pike Room, 1 S. Saginaw, Pontiac;

DJ/Dance

All Black Attire Party at Diamondback Music Hall 8 pm-2 am; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville; 25.

Bassonic Temple with Zeds Dead (16+) 7:30 pm and 7:30 pm; Detroit Masonic Temple Library, 500 Temple St, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Karaoke/Open Mic

Continuing This Week Karaoke/

Open Mic

Live On Lahser: Open Mic by The Vision Detroit Last Saturday of every month, 8-11 pm; Artist Village Detroit, 17336 Lahser Rd., Detroit; $10.

Sunday Nov 30

Live/Concert

Béla Fleck & the Flecktones 4 pm; Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor; Starting at $14.

DAMIANO DAVID 7:30 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit; $59.50-$79.50.

Fantastic Four Show & Dance Party 7 pm-midnight; NSYNC Dance Studio, 7940 W. Outer Drive, Detroit, MI; $20.

Frog Mallet, Dissected, Decedent, Excremental Scaphism, Infectious Waste 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Lalah Hathaway 7:30 pm; Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit;

Like Moths To Flames 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings 5-8 pm; Zal Gaz Grotto Club, 2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor; No Cover (cash tipjar for the band).

Rock 'n' Shop at Showtime! Last Sunday of every month, 2-6 pm; Showtime Clothing, 9704 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; Free.

Southern Fires presents Jam Sessions ft. Dnise Jonson Band Hosted by Lucretia Sain 6-9 pm; Southern Fires, 575 Bellevue, Detroit, MI; Free.

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Southern Fires presents Jam Sessions ft. Dnise Jonson Band Hosted by Lucretia Sain 6-9 pm; Southern Fires, 575 Bellevue, Detroit, MI; Free.

DJ/Dance

SPKR BRNCH 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Karaoke/Open Mic

Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Sunday Karaoke in the Lounge 5-9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; 0.

Sunday Service Karaoke Hosted by Sister DJ Larry 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Sunday Service Karaoke | DJ Larry noon-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak,

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FOOD

Rahha Café serves bold coffee and quick bites in Midtown

The Arabic word "raha" translates to "comfort" or "peace of mind," which is what the founders of the new Rahha Café say they hope to bring to Midtown.

The cafe opened last week inside the Hannan Center at 4750 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

The founders include alumni of nearby Wayne State University and first-generation immigrants from Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, and Pakistan, who say they wanted to create a space with affordable breakfast and lunch options for students and workers in the neighborhood.

Fadel Al-Marsoumi describes the concept as "a modern brunch place that blends Middle Eastern flavors with Detroit's brunch culture," and hopes it will be "bringing together faculty, staff, and neighbors across Midtown."

The menu is focused on Yemeni coffee and Adeni chai, known for their bold flavors.

"Yemeni coffee is actually one of the oldest and most distinct coffees in the world," Al-Marsoumi says. "It dates back to 500 years." The Arabica beans are spiced and dried in the sun, resulting in a taste Al-Marsoumi describes as "chocolatey and earthy flavored."

The menu will also feature typical American fare like pancakes and waffles.

The restaurant seats about 70 and occupies a space that previously held Mediterranean and soul food restaurants. The Hannan Center is a long-standing nonprofit that serves older adults in the neighborhood with social programs including an art gallery, which is why the owners say they wanted to create something simple and inclusive.

"We're not trying to cater to a very extravagant model where prices are very expensive," says Ramzy Aiyash. "Our main demographic is Wayne State students and hospital employees, and just employees in the area in general."

Rahha Café serves Yemeni coffee in the Hannan Center. COURTESY PHOTO

He adds, "If you're a student who needs a quick bite, if you're somebody at the VA hospital that needs to grab a bagel, we're in line with that kind of price. We're here for the neighborhood. We grew up in the area, we know what it's like."

In addition to Al-Marsoumi and Aiyash, the restaurant team also includes Farook Salah, Ahmad Abu-Zahra and Rafid Al-Marsoumi.

—Lee DeVito

80-year-old family-run Hamtramck bakery expands

A long-standing Detroit-area bakery known for its hot dog buns has expanded, boosting its production capacity and hiring 25 more workers.

Hamtramck's Metropolitan Baking Company says its recently completed expansion project added 37,000 square feet of state of the art facilities to its original location, growing its capacity by nearly 40%.

The 80-year-old business is known for providing steamed hot dog buns to local coney island restaurants. It now provides buns, rolls, and other bread products to restaurants and schools across the U.S. Its hot dog buns are even served in New York City's Yankee Stadium.

The family-run company was founded in 1945 and originally operated out of two Hamtramck homes.

"My father, Jim, had the vision to more fully automate the plant and is now beaming with pride," MBC president George Kordas, who is the grandson of the company's founder, said in a statement. "I wish my grandfather could see this moment — the shiny new state of the art facilities and our reach across the country would certainly impress him, but what would matter most is knowing that Metropolitan still carries forward his passion for quality baking and his respect for the people who make it possible — our employees and our loyal customers."

Kordas said the expansion includes a new break room and lockers for its staff, most of which come from the community and live within five miles of the bakery. The expansion also features new shipping docks that will lessen the impact of trucks on neighborhood streets, he added.

"We have an incredible, dedicated team, which is why we were confident in this latest expansion," he said.

According to Kordas, the bakery produces 240 dozen buns per minute and roughly 140 loaves of bread per minute, working nearly round the clock six days a week and using roughly 800,000 lbs of flour.

Its products are primarily sold under the Kordas brand name. In addition to hot dog buns, its products include Pullman breads, brioche buns, Kaiser rolls, and more.

Kordas said the company is debt-free and has "a conservative attitude," declining grants and other opportunities on principle — including a potential incentive from the Michigan Agriculture Commission.

"Our view is that a financially stable city can do more for its people and infrastructure, better schools and improved public safety," Kordas said. "Hamtramck has been good to us — it's a wonderful community — and the last thing we want to do is slow down progress. Instead, we want to grow opportunities and take our Detroit pride to customers across the country."

—Lee DeVito

Chubby Cattle Wagyu Shabu House opens in Sakura Novi project

A new restaurant is now open in the Japanese-themed "Sakura Novi" development.

Chubby Cattle Wagyu Shabu House opened its doors at 42768 Grand River Ave., Novi. The restaurant is the Chubby Group's first in Michigan and focuses on all-you-can-eat Japanese-style yakiniku hotpot.

"We're excited to bring the Chubby Cattle Wagyu Shabu House experience to Novi," Chubby Group co-founder David Zhao said in a statement. "Michigan is home to some of the country's most adventurous food lovers, and we believe our take on wagyu hotpot — blending authenticity, innovation, and premium ingredients — will truly resonate with the local community."

The elevated menu includes fresh-cut A5 Wagyu and other global wagyu cuts from an Oregon ranch, which can be cooked to diners' individual preference at their own tableside grill.

Sushi and hand rolls, seafood, milk tea, and Japanese desserts are also on offer.

Prices range from $48 per person to $78 per person.

The restaurant boasts what it describes as decor inspired by Japanese anime with wall murals.

More information is available at chubbycattle.com or on Instagram @ chubbycattleshabunovi.

—Lee DeVito

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Steve Martin and John Candy in Planes, Trains and Automobiles. FLIXPIX/PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Movies

We're thankful for these films

By Jared Rasic, Last Word Pictures

Thanksgiving movies don't get the credit they deserve. We get a ton of Christmas, Halloween, and other holiday movies canonized as classics and added to the yearly viewing rotation, but Thanksgiving has always remained the day when people slowly food-coma themselves into oblivion in front of football or parades.

Still, I think it's time to spotlight a few pretty great Thanksgiving movies for those of us who prefer cinema to sports and celebrate the genius it takes to build a movie around a problematic holiday where the most excitement involved is usually how many deviled eggs one can eat before things go south.

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

This is the obvious one for people of a certain generation, but I'll always bring this 1987 film up whe nyounger folks are around to keep the appreciation of John Candy alive for a thousand years to come.

This classic follows an uptight ad exec (the wonderful Steve Martin) and a talkative but affable salesman (Candy) as they go on a very circuitous journey from New York to Chicago (by way of Kansas and a few other states) to try to make it home for Thanksgiving. It remains endlessly quotable ("Our speedometer has melted, and as a result, it's very hard to see with any degree of accuracy exactly how fast we were going."), genuinely heartwarming, and a good reminder that the holiday isn't about pilgrims as much as a celebration of the people we love and choose to share our lives with.

Knives Out

While the film isn't specifically set on Thanksgiving, *Knives Out* is still the perfect viewing antidote for those of us who have complicated relationships with our family. From writer-director Rian Johnson, *Knives Out* is a classic cinematic throwback to detectives like Marple, Poirot, and Holmes, but all centered around a profoundly dysfunctional family played by a murderers' row of great actors including Michael Shannon, Chris Evans, Jamie Lee Curtis, Don Johnson, Christopher Plummer, and Toni Collette. Watching these characters sit around a table and squabble over petty insecurities reminds me of too many Thanksgivings to count and, for good or ill, feels pretty nostalgic.

Fantastic Mr. Fox

This also isn't set on Thanksgiving necessarily, but with the autumn leaves filling almost every frame and the focus on community, food and families both fond and otherwise, it's not only the perfect film for kids to watch on the holiday, but grown-ups will find their eyes getting awfully moist as well. What on the surface seems like a simple story about securing food for the winter plays quite differently at a time when food security is in question. Big-hearted, warmly optimistic and filled to the brim with calls for goodness and charity, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* should be canonized as the Thanksgiving movie closest to the spirit of the holiday.

You've Got Mail

While only briefly touching on Thanksgiving, *You've Got Mail* is still a perfect romance to watch with your person after dinner. With a chemistry that I'm not sure any actors have achieved since, Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan are so effortlessly charming and dreamy that it's hard not to fall in love with them, too. Even if some of the story points feel a little sexist now, the film is still the equivalent of a rich dessert shared with a special someone.

Big Night

Not connected to Thanksgiving in any way other than in how it celebrates family and food, *Big Night* should still be played as an appetizer to the Thanksgiving meal since I'm not sure food has ever looked more delicious onscreen before or since.Stanley Tucci, Tony Shalhoub, Minnie Driver, Ian Holm, and Isabella Rossellini cook up something truly delicious here that makes my mouth water just thinking about it.

There are so many other solid Thanksgiving canon choices. For the horror movie fanatic in your life, you could show Eli Roth's turkey slasher *Thanksgiving*. For the Boomer in your life. There's *The Big Chill*. The little ones will always appreciate *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*. If you're after a heartwarming dramedy, don't forget about the Jodie Foster-directed *Home for the Holidays*. Or if you want to focus on the historical perspective, Terence Malick's *The New World* is an underseen classic. Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* has one of the tensest Thanksgiving dinners committed to film. And *Pieces of April* reminds us to forgive and find gratitude in the small things.

Me? My go-to movie for Thanksgiving is *Fellowship of the Ring*. Why, you may ask? Two reasons: 1) It's the coziest movie ever made. The shire is all vibes and I want them religiously. 2) Hearing Sam Gamgee exclaim, "Po-ta-toes! Boil 'em, mash 'em, stick 'em in a stew" makes me hungry, happy, and full of thanks. MT

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The Straight Dope

How a basement grow became one of Michigan's most respected cannabis brands

By Steve Neavling

From growing weed in the basement to becoming one of the most sought-after premium cultivators in Michigan's cannabis market, Growing Pains has clawed its way to the top.

Tom Farrell, co-founder of the Paw Paw brand, started growing as a caregiver in his west Michigan basement. He used the name Growing Pains because it was a pun and summed up the challenges of growing well. The name stuck and became an apt way to describe the learning curve of producing high-quality flower in a market flooded with flower.

He and co-founder Seth Miller built Growing Pains "by our hands," Farrell explains, from installing the plumbing and irrigation system themselves to traveling across the country to track down unique new strains. The duo and their team worked long hours, learned from their mistakes, and committed to growing top-tier weed. Without deep-pocketed investors that have tried to dominate the market, the small crew turned their passion and commitment into their currency.

"I was always strict on quality and growing high-quality flower," Farrell tells me. "When I get involved in something, I get really obsessed. I don't sleep or eat. I just want to work on it. It spilled over into everything — the details and nuances."

The DIY approach allowed the crew to grow incrementally. They started in a modest 5,000-square-foot building and saved money until they could afford to expand. They eventually scaled up, tripling their footprint to about 20,000 square feet.

Going from 84 flower lights to 304, Growing Pains can now grow up to 4,000 plants.

"It was a big expansion," Farrell says. "Our weed has gotten better as we expanded. Most people go through growing pains as they grow. Ours got more dialed in."

Since joining the recreational market in 2021, Growing Pains has built a loyal following by consistently rolling out fragrant, heavy-hitting flower.

In September, Growing Pains won three Michigan Zalympix awards for its impressive Honey Banana flower, which smells and tastes like banana bread stuffed with strawberries and honey and a dash of tea.

Growing Pains also took a dive into live rosin, a solventless concentrate known for its purity, potency, and flavor. The team brought on an experienced rosin producer, Jason Waller, who was tired of selling cars and missed weed.

Now Growing Pains is churning out some of the most unique and flavorful rosin strains in the state.

"I only knew enough to get in trouble with rosin," Farrell says. "Jason is as obsessed with rosin as I am with growing weed. It's so good to see that passion. He really cares. He has been a godsend. He was in the industry for years."

In search of good flower to press into rosin, Farrell embarked on a cross-country trip and hooked up with L.A. Family Farms in California, where he traded a papaya strain for the Honey Banana. The buds were "fingery" and "very ugly," Farrell says, so no one expected to sell any of it as flower.

"We saved a pound, and it looked crazy, and I smoked it, and I said, 'Holy cow, this is great,'" Farrell recalls. "I didn't have bags made, so I ran down to Menards and got half-ounce jars."

And just like that, Growing Pains became one of the first cultivators in the state to offer half-ounce jars when it debuted the flower at the Refinery dispensary in Kalamazoo, which Farrell owns.

"My shop went crazy. People really liked it," Farrell says.

Today, the jars range from $80 to $100 and are stuffed with large, sticky buds. Other high-quality growers followed suit and turned out their own versions of half-ounce jars, which have become popular among connoisseurs and others who enjoy great weed at a reasonable price.

A testament to the brand's popularity, hundreds of people attended a rosin collaboration party co-hosted by Growing Pains and Detroit-based Hytek on Nov. 6 at Burn 1, a new consumption lounge in Utica. Some people drove hours to snag a limited edition rosin that combined the fruity, tropical sweetness of Growing Pains's Honey Banana with the creamy, lime flavor of Hytek's Lantz, which also did well in the Zalympix awards. Within an hour, the one-gram jars of rosin sold out.

"It wasn't easy getting to this point," Farrell says. "Early on it was tough. The weed in the first round didn't come out well at all. We couldn't figure it out."

And then they did, and Growing Pains never looked back. The brand runs about 20 to 25 strains and recently began an in-house breeding project to hunt for the best genetics. It's a laborious process, but Farrell and Miller are on the hunt for special genetics and phenotypes.

"Our goal is to find extraordinary cuts," Farrell says. "It's like a chef in a restaurant. We want to give our customers something different."

Among Growing Pains's most recent drops are Burnout O.G., a hybrid bred in-house that smells like a funky combination of cookies, kush, and diesel, and Candy Bonez, an indica-dominant hybrid that blends the flavor of creamy sherbert and ice cream.

I sampled five strains of flower and two jars of rosin, along with pre-rolls and disposable vapes. See metrotimes.com for my reviews of some damn good weed by a team that has gone through some growing pains and emerged as a dependable source of quality cannabis. MT

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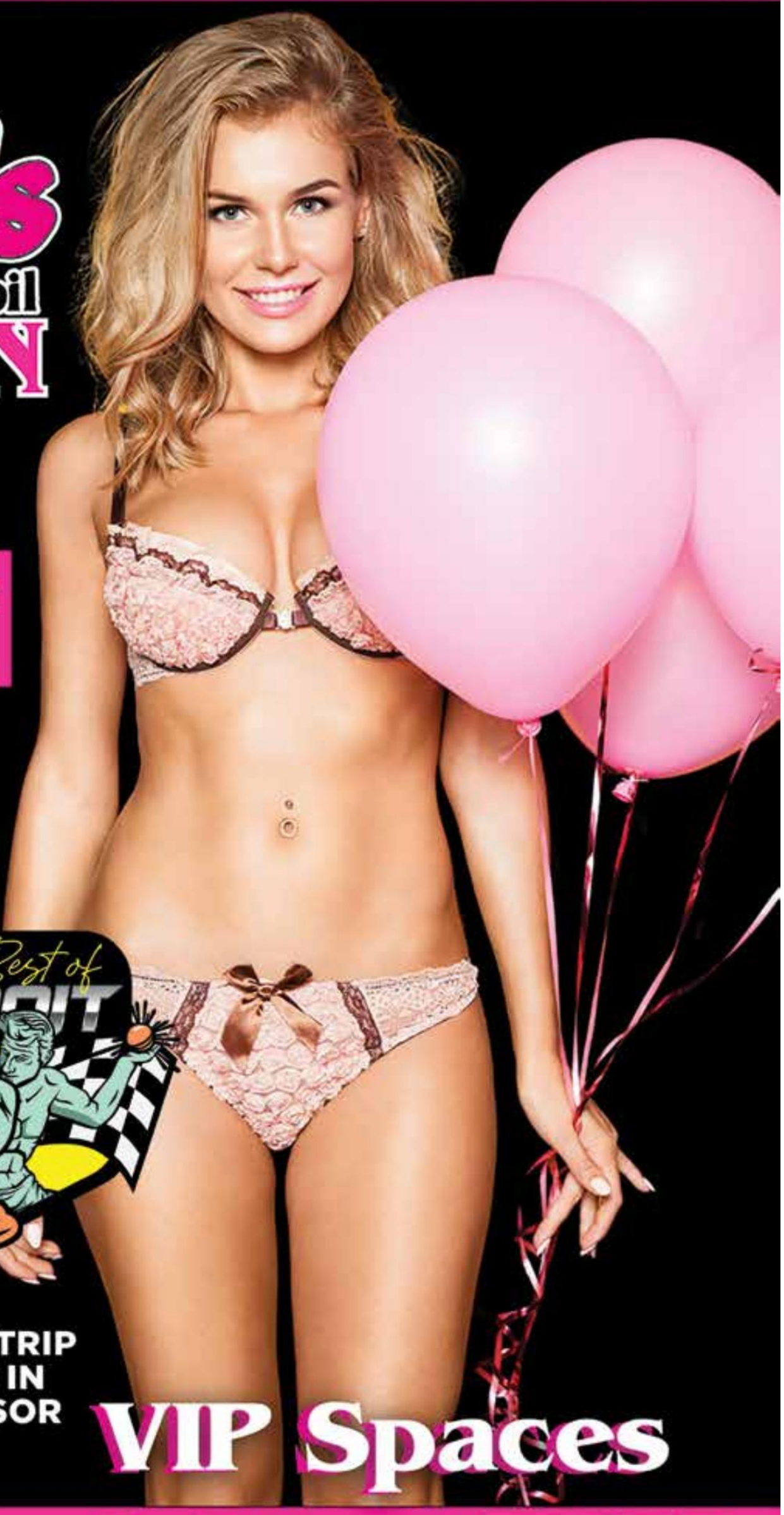

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CULTURE

Savage Love

This Again

By Dan Savage

Q: ***The person who*** *introduced me to your column and podcast — my wife — is ironically the source of my woes. We have a child and a lovely home and financial security. But the issue is my feelings of sexual dissatisfaction.*

My wife suffers from health issues that make sex painful. I never pressure her, and her wellbeing is always my top priority, so for years I've "taken care of myself." However, she also isn't a "touchy-feely person," while I love cuddles, holding hands, and kissing. As the years have gone by, I've grown resentful. I feel undesired and unloved. I no longer initiate any sexual moves, since I always get rejected. Since she has "good days" and "bad days," we agreed the ball should be in her court and that she would initiate when she was feeling well enough. However, this has led to months of no sexual contact. We maybe had sex twice a year. We try and have open communication and when it reaches a point of me feeling particularly down, I raise the subject. This usually resorts in us setting a date to at least snuggle, but it feels like a chore for her, which just exacerbates my feelings of worthlessness. For that reason, I've stopped trying at all.

I'm in my early thirties and I feel like my best sexual years are disappearing before my eyes. I recently started going to trance nights and meeting new people. Speaking to other women and feeling a sense that I'm desired has made me feel alive again. I've been faithful to my wife, but I can't see things continuing as they are and the two of us maintaining a healthy relationship. If you had suggested an open relationship to me six years ago, I would've said you were psychotic, as I once experienced pretty intense jealousy. But now the thought of my wife with another man does not bother me at all.

These are my questions:

1. Is an open relationship a feasible option?

2. Would suggesting this not destroy my wife's self-esteem or, at the very least, hurt her feelings?

3. Is there another alternative your wise ass would suggest?

Aging Sex Machine Resentments

A: 1. Is an open relationship a feasible option? That's a tough one — let me go ask my husband of thirty years and my boyfriend of thirteen years.

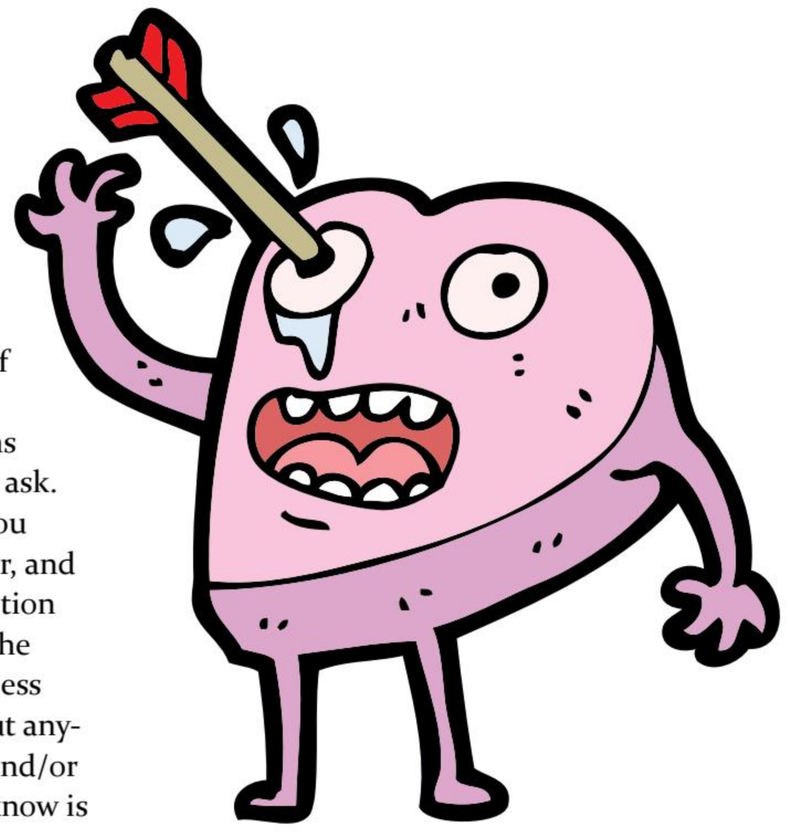
Good news! My husband and boyfriend both said open relationships *are* a feasible option. In fact, there are countless examples of once-closed-now-open relationships that work, mine included, and if you've been reading and/or listening to me for more than a month, ASMR, you couldn't have been ignorant of that fact. There are also lots of examples out there — far more examples — of successful closed relationships, including ones where the sex dried up for health reasons. So, honoring the monogamous commitment you made ("in sickness and in health"), it has to be said, is another feasible option.

"Feasible" doesn't mean "frictionless," ASMR, whether we're talking about open or closed relationships. And if living with very little sex and next to no physical intimacy isn't a feasible option for you any longer — if the emotional friction is more than you can bear — something will have to change. But if you don't wanna be a cheating piece of shit, ASMR, you'll need your wife's permission before you start fucking the women you're meeting at those trance nights.

2. The request you're about to make — this enormous ask — is going to hurt your wife's feelings. While she's likely aware of the problem, ASMR, there's a good chance she's rationalized and/or minimized the problem; it's also possible you've worked so hard to avoid pressuring her that she doesn't know how unhappy you really are. And asking you to go without sex — or to live with very little sex and no physical contact — is itself an enormous ask.

But asking your wife to open your marriage... for perfectly legitimate reasons... will force your wife to confront two painful subjects: your unhappiness and her illness. At the very least, she's going to be sad; it's entirely possible she'll be devastated. And she's almost certain to have perfectly legitimate fears — are you going to leave her for someone else? — and while you can offer reassurances, ASMR, the only way you can prove you won't leave her if she agrees to open your marriage is by not leaving her once you do. Kind of a Catch 22.

3. There are only three options in cases like yours: leave, cheat, ask. I haven't been holding out on you guys for the last 35 years, I swear, and if there was a magical fourth option — something that could solve the problem of sexless-or-near-sexless monogamous marriages without anyone getting their feelings hurt and/or anyone doing something they know is wrong — I would've shared it with you already.



P.S. Your wife reads my column — so, you had to know she would read your letter and recognize you, right?

P.P.S. If you ask and your wife's answer is "no," you can revisit your other choices: leave or cheat. Not ideal, I realize, but those are your options.

P.P.P.S. There is a fourth option: ask again later.

Q: ***I'm an Italian*** *straight man, married to a beautiful English woman for fifteen years. We have two kids and we live in Italy. We have been navigating non-monogamy in various troubled ways for over five years. It started with cheating before we settled on tolyamory. All along, my wife said she wasn't into meeting new people. But she recently reconnected with an old flame on Facebook. There has been some intense sexting and an exchange of nude photos. This all happened in secret. She finally confessed to me, saying she wants to pursue a relationship with this man (he lives in Holland) despite the fact that he is in a long-term relationship and his partner (they also have two kids) is not aware of his behavior, so he is cheating. The cheating has only occurred online up to now, but a meeting has been mentioned. I was in shock that my wife kept this from me and started a relationship without first talking about it. I would like her to stop interacting with this person and, if she must, seek out a more ethical connection. But she says he is the only other man she is interested in. Do you think my feelings are valid? She said she could just be friends with this guy without their chats being sexual, but I'm not sure that makes it any better. What do you think I should do?*

Lying Isn't Ever Sensible

A: Calm the fuck down. Your wife isn't guilty of "starting a relationship" without talking to you first, LIES, *because she isn't in a relationship with this guy*. She sent some dirty texts and swapped nudes with a guy she hasn't seen for at least fifteen years — that's all she did — and while she may even have been sexting with intent, *nothing actually happened*. She didn't cheat on you, LIES, and this Dutch guy hasn't cheated on his wife. If you want to do the most possible damage to your marriage, you can keep giving your wife grief for not disclosing this flirtation the moment it started... but why would you want to do that?

You say you guys settled on tolyamory, LIES, but you seem a little unclear on the concept: tolyamory means tolerating or putting up with your spouse's affairs. While very few toly couples have explicit agreements, being toly means turning a blind eye to what you suspect (or know) your partner is doing behind your back. In a mutually toly relationship, neither partner needs permission to do what they're gonna do, LIES, so long as they do it discreetly. If that's not what you want — if you require advance disclosure and want to have a veto — settling on tolyamory was a mistake.

You and the wife began to explore ethical non-monogamy after someone cheated, LIES, but you don't say who it was that cheated first. The omission makes me suspect it was you. And seeing as your wife hasn't expressed an interest in another man in the last five years, this is the first time you've had to confront the reality that your wife may want to act on her freedom, just as you've acted on yours. I suspect you're blowing her "infraction" out of all proportion in an effort to even the score: you cheated, you were wrong...

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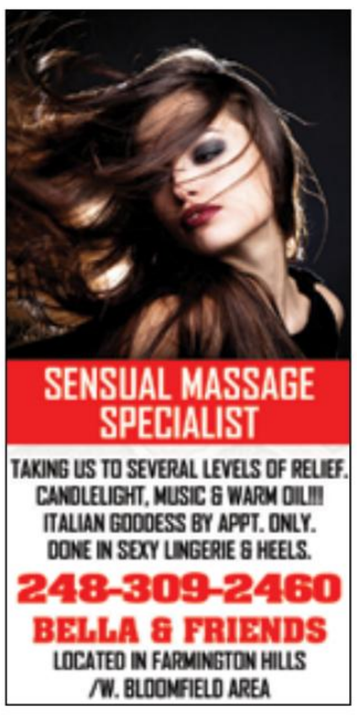
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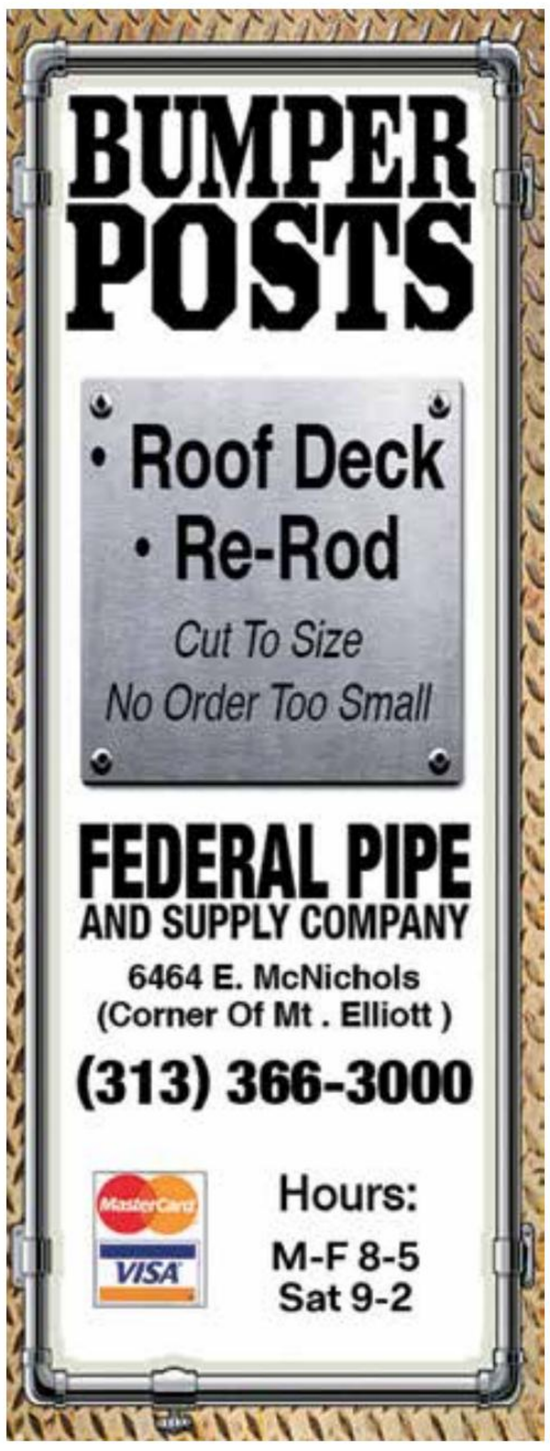

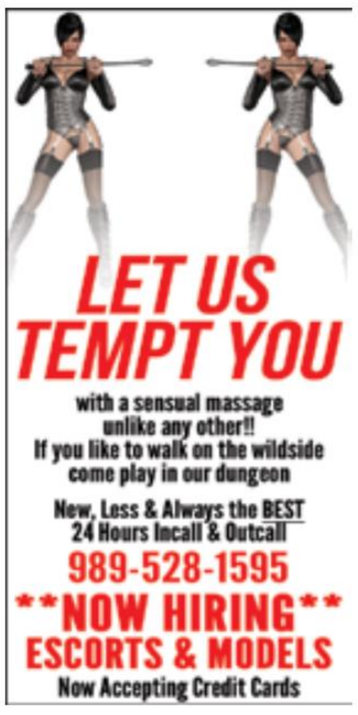
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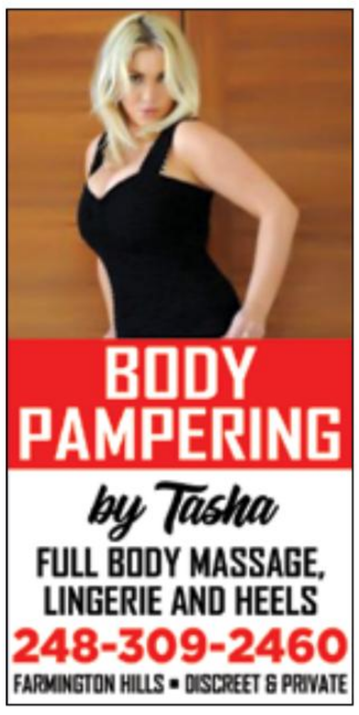
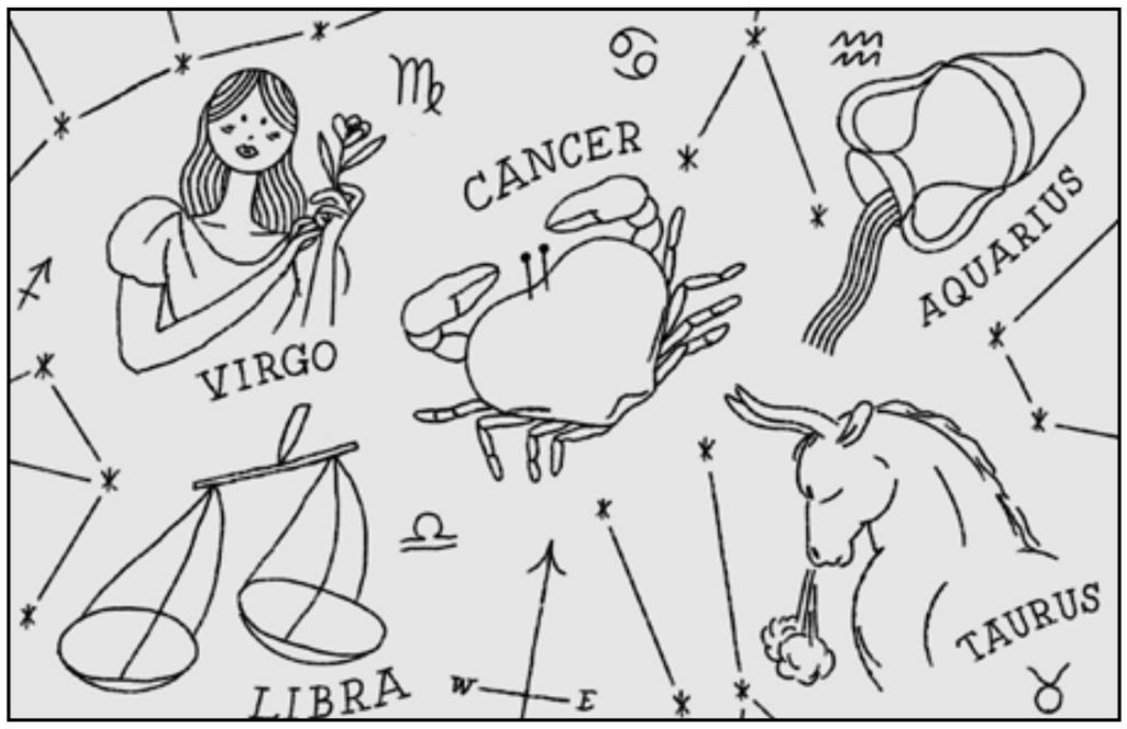


Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsny



JAMES NOELLERT

ARIES: March 21 – April 19
The Japanese word *mushin* means "no mind." In Zen Buddhism, it refers to the state of flow where thinking stops and being takes over. When you are moving along in the groove of mushin, your body knows what to do before your brain catches up. You're so present you disappear into the action itself. Athletes refer to it as "the zone." It's the place where effort becomes effortless, where you stop trying and simply love the doing. In the coming weeks, Aries, you can enjoy this state more than you have in a long time. Ride it with glee!

TAURUS: April 20 – May 20
For the foreseeable future, salmon are your spirit creatures. I'll remind you about their life cycle. They are born in freshwater, migrate to the ocean, and live there for years. Then they return, moving against river currents, up waterfalls, past bears and eagles. Eventually, they arrive at the exact stream where they were born. How do they do it? They navigate using the Earth's magnetic field and their sense of smell, remembering chemical signatures from years ago. I think your own calling is as vivid as theirs, dear Taurus. And in the coming weeks, you will be extra attuned to that primal signal. Trust the ancient pull back toward your soul's home.

GEMINI: May 21 – June 20
What if procrastination isn't always a problem? On some occasions, maybe it's a message from your deeper self. Delay could serve as a form of protection. Avoidance might be a sign of your deep wisdom at work. Consider these possibilities, Gemini. What if your resistance to the "should" is actually your soul's immune system rejecting a foreign agenda? It might be trying to tell you secrets about what you truly want versus what you think you should want.

CANCER: June 21 – July 22
I'm only slightly joking when I recommend that you practice the art of sacred bitching in the coming days. You are hereby authorized to complain and criticize with creative zeal. But the goal is not to push hard in a quest to solve problems perfectly. Instead, simply give yourself the luxury of processing and metabolizing the complications. Your venting and whining won't be pathological, but a legitimate way to achieve emotional release. Sometimes, like now, you need acknowledgment more than solutions. Allowing feelings is more crucial than fixing things. The best course of action is saying "this is hard" until it's slightly less hard.

LEO: July 23 – August 22
The Chinese concept of *yuanfen* means that some connections are fated. Certain people were always meant to cross your path. Not soulmates necessarily, but soul-evokers: those who bring transformations that were inscribed on your destiny before you knew they were coming. When you meet a new person and feel instant recognition, that's yuanfen. When a relationship changes your life, that's yuanfen. When timing aligns impossibly but wonderfully, that's yuanfen. According to my analysis, you Leos are due for such phenomena in the coming weeks—at least two, maybe more. Some opportunities appear because you pursue them. Others were always going to arrive simply because you opened your mind and heart.

VIRGO: August 23 – Sept. 22
Let's talk about a forest's roots. Mostly hidden from sight, they are the source of all visible life. They are always communicating with each other, sharing nourishment and information. When extra help is needed, they call on fungi networks to support them, distributing their outreach even further. Your own lineage works similarly, Virgo. It's nutrient-rich and endlessly intertwined with others, some of whom came long before you. You are the flowering tip of an unseen intelligence. Every act of grounding—breathing deeply, resting your feet, returning to gratitude—is your body's way of remembering its subterranean ancestry. Please keep these meditations at the forefront of your awareness in the coming weeks. I believe you will thrive to the degree that you draw from your extensive roots.

LIBRA: Sept. 23 – Oct. 22
You are currently in a phase when it's highly possible to become both smarter and wiser. You have a sixth sense for knowing exactly how to enhance both your intellectual and emotional intelligence. With this happy news in mind, I will remind you that your brain is constantly growing and changing. Every experience carves new neural pathways. Every repeated thought strengthens certain connections and weakens others. You're not stuck with the brain you have, but are continuously building the brain that's evolving. The architecture of your consciousness is always under construction. Take full advantage of this resilience and plasticity!

SCORPIO: Oct. 23 – Nov. 21:
The coming weeks will be a favorable time to stand near what you want to become. I advise you to surround yourself with the energy you want to embody. Position yourself in the organic ecosystem of your aspirations without grasping or forcing. Your secret power is not imitation but osmosis. Not ambition but proximity. The transformations you desire will happen sideways, through exposure and absorption. You won't become by trying to become; you will become by staying close to what calls you.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 22 – Dec. 21
Some seeds can remain dormant for centuries, waiting for the right conditions to germinate. The oldest successfully germinated seed was a 2,000-year-old date palm seed. I suspect you will experience psycho-spiritual and metaphorical versions of this marvel in the coming weeks. Certain aspects of you have long been dormant but are about to sprout. Some of your potentials have been waiting for conditions that you haven't encountered until recently. Is there anything you can do to encourage these wondrous developments? Be alert for subtle magic that needs just a little nudge.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22 – Jan. 19
Orb weaver spiders make seven different types of silk, each engineered for different purposes: sticky silk for catching prey, strong silk for the web's frame, stretchy silk for wrapping food, and soft silk for egg sacs. In other words, they don't generate a stream of generic resources and decide later what to do with them. Each type of silk is produced by distinct silk glands and spinnerets, and each is carefully tailored for a particular use. I advise you to be like the orb weavers in the coming weeks, Capricorn. Specificity will be your superpower.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 20 – Feb. 18
Benevolent gossip is the practice of speaking about people not to diminish them but to fondly wonder about them and try to understand them. What if gossip could be generous? What if talking about someone in their absence could be an act of compassionate curiosity rather than judgment? What if you spoke about everyone as if they might overhear you—not from fear but from respect? Your words about others could be spells that shape how they exist in the collective imagination. Here's another beautiful fact about benevolent gossip: It can win you appreciation and attention that will enhance your ability to attract the kind of help and support you need.

PISCES: Feb.19 – March 20
Every 21,000 years, the Sahara Desert transforms into a lush green savanna. It's due to precession, which is a wobble in the Earth's axis. The African seasonal monsoon becomes much stronger, bringing increased rainfall to the entire area. The last time this occurred was from about 11,000 to 5,000 years ago. During this era, the Sahara supported lakes, rivers, grasslands, and diverse animal and human populations. I'm predicting a comparable shift for you in the coming months, Pisces. The onset of luxuriant growth is already underway. And right now is an excellent time to encourage and expedite the onset of flourishing abundance. Formulate the plans and leap into action. MT

Homework: *Give yourself a pep talk about how to thrive when other people aren't at their best.*

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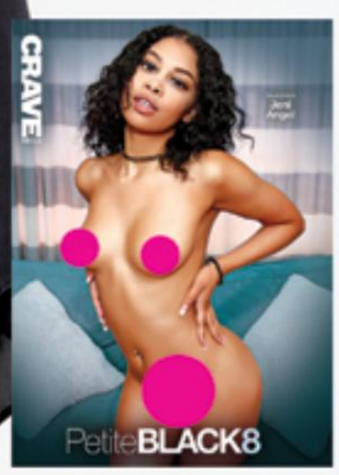

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